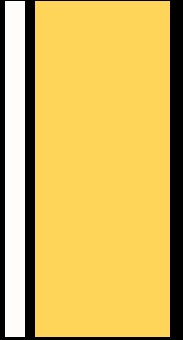




The A Campaign

+ Once upon a time,



Just before my final semester of college, I decided it was *now or never* for a **big adventure**. Graduation was just around the corner, and a full time job was sure to follow. If I wanted to see the **world**, I needed to do it soon. So I pleaded with my parents and packed my bags.

On February 12, 2011, I left Muncie, Indiana for Liberia, West Africa on an adventure that would change my life. During my journey I met a little African girl named Alberta.

This is **our** story.



Liberia:

The third poorest country
in the entire **world** →

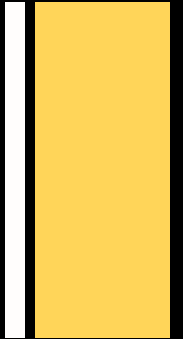
Bordered by the Ivory Coast on the east,
Guinea on the north,
and Sierra Leone on the west.

Where the average person lives off
less than \$1 a day,
and doesn't have access to
clean, safe drinking water.





A country devastated by war



Where villages were plundered

men were shot

women were raped

and children were kidnapped



then forced to kill.

For **fourteen** long years,

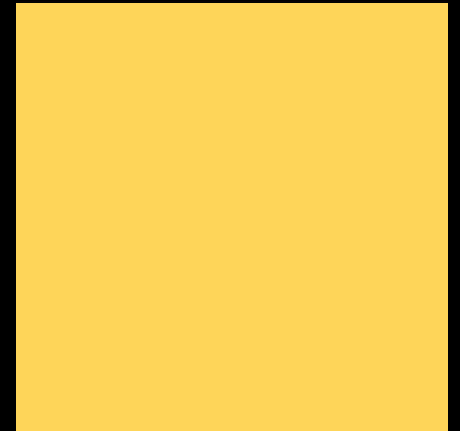
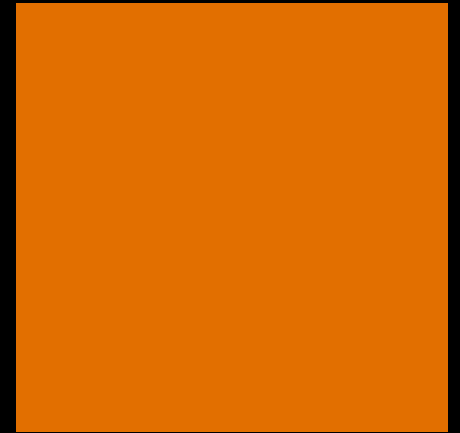
[from 1989 until 2003]

Liberia suffered through bloody civil war.

The fighting left hospital facilities looted and **destroyed**,
health professionals forced to flee or **killed**,

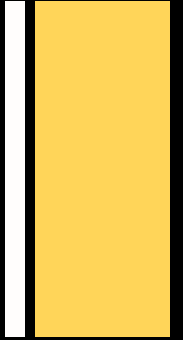
+

and the country's medical infrastructure **crippled**.





While the road to recovery is painful and long
the Liberian people are **resilient**.



Let me introduce you to an example → → →



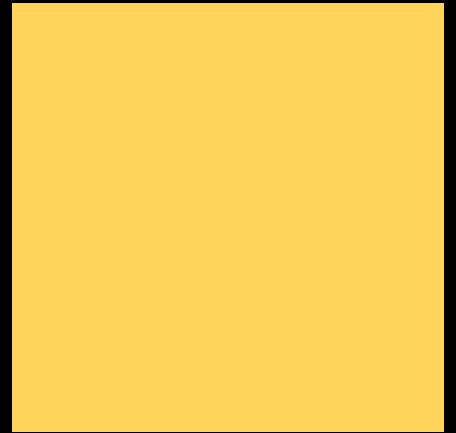
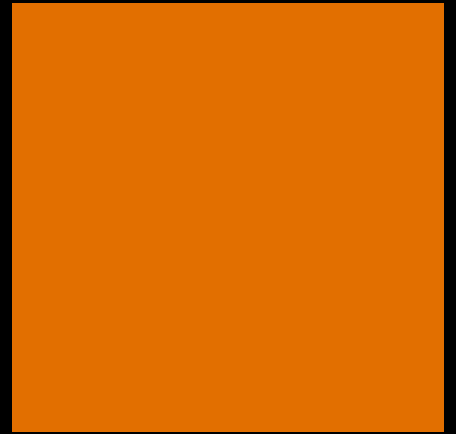
She is 5 years old and her name is **Alberta.**

+

I noticed the scar on Alberta's forehead,

and asked her grandmother, "*What happened?*"





I was unprepared for the answer.



When Alberta was three years old, she fell into hot frying oil.

Miraculously, she survived.

Her burns were extensive, and with access to only Liberia's poor medical care, her treatment was minimal.

During her painful recovery, the burned skin on her upper arm and torso fused together, leaving Alberta severely deformed.

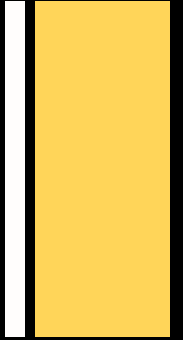
Her condition not only caused her physical pain, but would inevitably cause her a life of hardship and ostracism because of her deformity.





+

My heart broke.



I didn't know what I could do,
but I knew I had to **try**.

+

I took Alberta's photos,
and emailed them to a *dentist*.

a dentist?

...Let me explain.

Mercy Ships is an organization that takes old cruise ships and revamps them into floating hospitals. The ships travel to third world countries providing first world care. Keith, an American missionary dentist based in Liberia, was temporarily on one.





The ship he was on was
docked in Sierra Leone → → →

WEST AFRICA

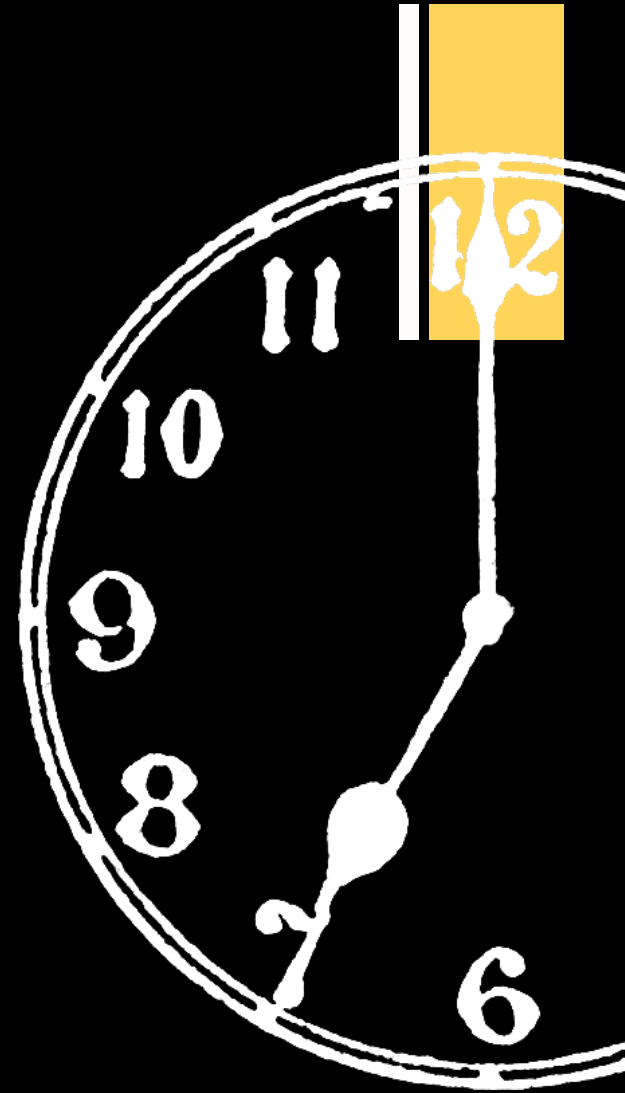
SIERRA
LEONE

LIBERIA

Could Alberta get help there ?

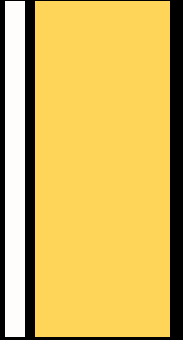
+ I waited
and waited
and waited.

[The next 24 hours felt like an eternity.]



At last, I received a reply from Sierra Leone →

+ And the answer was **yes**.



Yes, there is a surgery to fix a burn contracture such as this.

Yes, we can perform that surgery here on the ship.

Yes, we will accept Alberta as a patient even though she is not from Sierra Leone.

All you have to do is get her here.

+ I couldn't wait to tell Alberta's family the news.

I drove to her village as soon as I could.



The feeling of joy was remarkable,

but I knew my fight for Alberta was just beginning.



With only
enough cash to
fund the
remainder of
my own trip,
how was I
possibly going
to fund
Alberta's
journey cross
country?

[It wasn't a matter of *if* she was
going to get to Sierra Leone,
but it sure was a matter of *how*.]



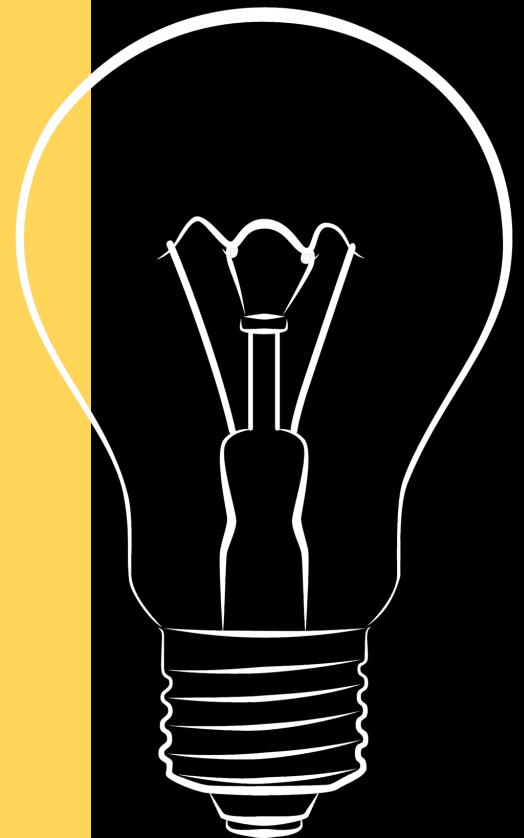
I sat and
I thought and
I had an idea.

I called my Liberian friend, Jon,
who carves beautiful coconut jewelry.

I called my American friend, David,
who creates beautiful web design.

*I sketched layouts,
outlined ideas,
plotted and planned.*

And late that night, **the A Campaign** was born.



+ www.theAcampaign.com

A web site to tell people her story.

A bracelet they could purchase to fund her travels.

A solution to the problem.



[Alberta](#) | [The Orphanage](#) | [Bracelet](#) | [Donate](#) | [Contact](#) | [FAQs](#)



About the A Campaign

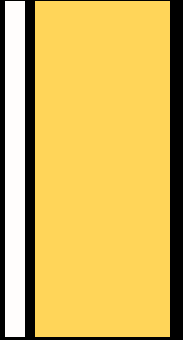
A is for **Alberta**, a five year old girl and burn survivor living in Liberia, West Africa. With support from people like you, the A Campaign quickly accomplished its mission of helping Alberta get the surgery she needed. But instead of calling it quits after helping one child, the campaign continues. Join the A Campaign today in supporting the sixteen orphans of the Ma Dewelie Orphanage in war-torn Liberia. Share their story and wear your support.

[Buy the Bracelet](#)



Generating the idea was easy.

Bringing the idea to life was not.



Communication was a huge struggle
and logistics were a nightmare.

Phone calls from Africa to North America between David and I constantly dropped.

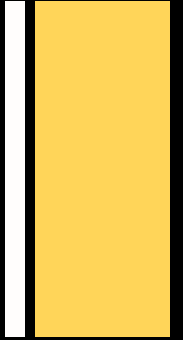
Jon's broken English and my inability to understand the local dialect hurt our conversations.

There is no postal system in Liberia, and no UPS or FedEx to ship bracelets from Liberia to the states.



However, with a little perseverance, patience and creativity,

the site was live.



David purchased the first bracelet to make sure the functionality of the site was in working order.

The Steven bought a bracelet.

Then Becca.

Then Kevin.

Then Kelly.

Then Robert.

Then Tracy.

Then Kristie.

Then Daniel.

Then Melissa.

Then Andy.

Then Nick.

+ We asked people to donate their **voice**.

And they did →

Donate your Voice

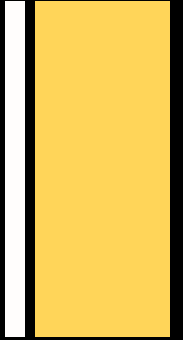
Don't just read this story, share it. Email it, Facebook it, tweet it, shout it from the rooftops (that last idea might be a little extreme, but you get the idea). Tell your friends and family how they can help, and the awesome bracelet they can get by doing so.

✓ Recommend 79

🐦 Tweet 1



David and I told all of our friends,
who told their friends,
who told their friends.



At first the bracelets were selling to people we knew,

moms

dads

aunts

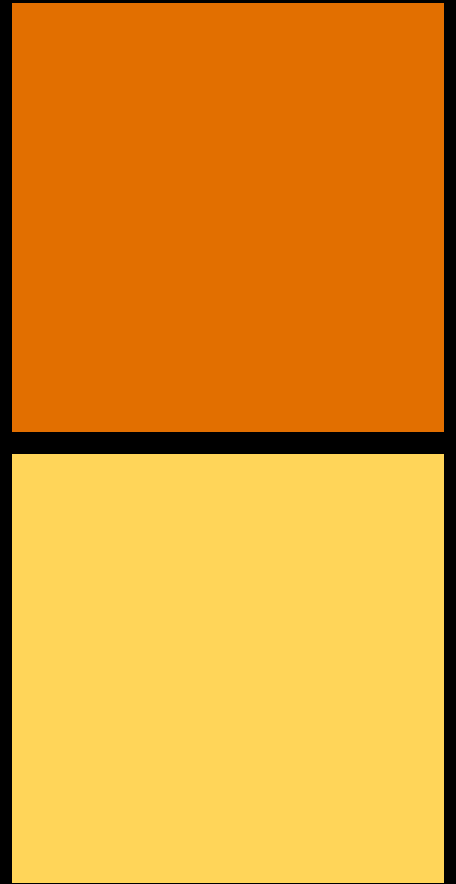
uncles

classmates

roommates

but soon they were selling to people we didn't.

Less than a week later,
the A Campaign had raised enough money
to fund Alberta's journey to Sierra Leone,



+ thanks to David and Jon
and people like you.

+ When it was time to leave for Sierra Leone, Alberta climbed into the van with a smile on her face.



She had never before been outside of her village; she gazed out the window until she grew tired.





We crossed into Sierra Leone and prepared to say our goodbyes.

I hugged Alberta tightly, wondering when I'd ever see her again.

I thought saying goodbye would be the hardest part of the journey, but I was about to be proven wrong.



While reentering Liberia
we were stopped by Sierra Leonean guards.

The rising volume of their voices was **terrifying**;
they shouted in a language
that I did not understand.

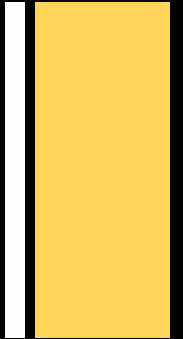
My mind raced with the worst possible scenarios.

Fines.

Questioning.

Arrest.

Jail.



+

At last,
the guards
allowed

us

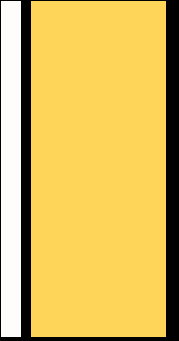
to

pass,

and I was

overwhelmed

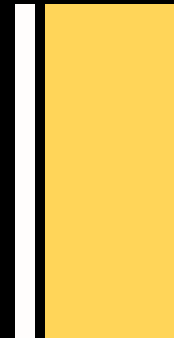
with relief.



+ I returned to Liberia that evening
excited.



Alberta was **one step closer** to a brighter future.



The following months were filled with **waiting**,

waiting to hear if Alberta received her surgery

waiting for updates on her recovery

but they were also filled with **joy**.

The surgery was successful

and she made a full recovery.



But even with this news, the wait was not over.



I still wait for the day I'll see Alberta again.

I don't know when that day will come,
but I have no doubt that it will.

+ I cried when I packed to leave Liberia,
but it wasn't until I got home that I
realized I'd left something behind.

My heart broke the day I met Alberta,
and she kept a tiny piece of it.

She will always be a part of my **story**,
and consequently,
a part of **me**.

+ I never expected
to take on a project
like the A Campaign,

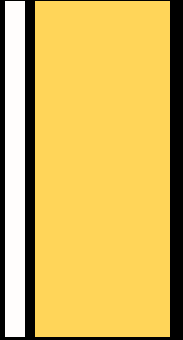
but I am
incredibly
thankful
that I did.





In both big and small ways,

the campaign made a difference.



Over a thousand people visited the web site
where they learned a **new story**,

Alberta made it to the Mercy Ship
where she got a **new arm**,

and I left a part of me in Liberia,
where I gained a **new faith**.



A faith that I can make miracles happen,
but that I can't make them happen alone,

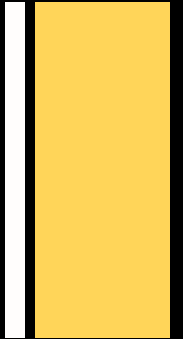


that it only takes **one spark**

to get a fire going,

and that one of the most **powerful weapon**

a person can fight with **is a story.**





Alberta's story changed my life.

I hope that in some small way, **our** story can change **yours**.

